

Simplifying Life (Part Four)

Cultivating the Ability to Wait on God's Timing

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Greetings brothers and sisters from Colton, California. Please turn to Daniel 12:4, a familiar scripture about the current knowledge explosion which characterizes the tumultuous, turbulent time of the end.

Daniel 12:4 “But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase.”

The end-times indeed seem to be characterized by relentless hurry and difficulty keeping up with the exploding torrent of information such as we have been witnessing, especially during the past two decades with Google, artificial intelligence, delivering ChatGPT, Grok, and our very own Theophilus (which is very useful, a wonderful tool).

As God’s called out saints, we find it extremely difficult to latch on to our Savior’s command in John 14:1 to let not our hearts be troubled, but instead believe firmly in the Father and also in Him, and John 14:27 to not let our hearts be troubled, nor let them be fearful, as well as the apostle Paul’s admonition in,

Philippians 4:6-7 Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

The overwhelming acceleration of information and data creates a paralyzing panic response and a predictable “fight-or-flight” reaction useless in coping with the need for waiting or slowing down, increasingly demanded of all of us in today’s frenetic culture.

The late Dr. Herbert Benson, in his 1975 best-selling self-help book, *The Relaxation Response*, took issue with the long-held notion that we are perpetual captives to the so-called fight-or-flight response as was hypothesized by physiologist Walter Bradford Cannon in 1915—a position sadly but predictably glommed on by many proponents of evolution, believing our ancestors were cave dwellers with spears and slings. Dr. Benson was able to prove through systematic research that the body has also been endued with what he termed a relaxation response, which is learned (as the apostle Paul learned to be content in every situation Philippians 4:11-12). That is, it is an inducible physiologic state of quietude—a survival mechanism to combat stress—the ability to heal and rejuvenate our bodies, reversing the neural damage inflicted by inappropriately triggered fight-or-flight responses we have previously learned and have consequently practiced over and over and over. However, with the continued practice of regular systematic meditation, we learn to turn highly stressful situations into quietude and oases of tranquility.

Dr. Benson's premise reminds me of the old Yiddish Proverb: *Vu men darf hobn Moyekh, helft nit keyn Koyekh*, which means, “When brains are needed, brawn or strength will not suffice.” Some of you may recall the premise of the 1965 British film, *Sands of the Kalahari*, when strength or brawn (represented by Brian O'Brien) was juxtaposed with brains or intellect (represented by Mike Bain), constituting the competing choices of the future courses of society and culture.

In this fourth installment of the “Simplifying Life” series, we will examine the dangers of haste and rashness, the value of waiting, and the necessity of trusting Almighty God's timing. The title of this message is “Simplifying Life (Part Four): Cultivating the Ability to Wait on God's Timing.” The Scriptures are replete with warnings about the dangers of haste and rashness. It is a major topic throughout the book of Proverbs.

Proverbs 14:29 He who is slow to wrath has great understanding, but he who is impulsive exalts folly.

The *Amplified* edition adds the additional cogent details: “He who is slow to anger has great understanding [and profits from his self-control], but he who is quick-tempered exposes and exalts his foolishness [for all to see].” This

verse affirms the importance of cultivating patience, especially when harnessing the deadly forces of anger. A hasty trigger temper only produces foolishness, while taking time to pause and think before reacting enables wisdom to prevail. Patience reflects God's character, a necessary trait for spiritual maturity. In Exodus 34:5-7, God describes Himself as merciful, gracious, and longsuffering, traits which God's chosen saints should diligently seek to emulate.

Proverbs 19:2 Also it is not good for a soul to be without knowledge, and he sins who hastens with his feet.

The *Amplified* edition adds the following insightful details: "Also, it is not good for a person to be without knowledge, and he who hurries with his feet [acting impulsively and proceeding without caution or analyzing the consequences] sins (misses the mark)." If we rush into something without fully understanding it, the consequences can be detrimental. Too many of us have been led astray when we forget that knowledge and insight are crucial in guiding our otherwise faltering steps.

Proverbs 20:21 An inheritance gained hastily at the beginning will not be blessed at the end.

The *Amplified* edition provides some additional insightful details: "An inheritance hastily gained [by greedy, unjust means] at the beginning will not be blessed in the end." Consider when Abraham and Sarah presumptuously jumped the gun, seeking Hagar as a surrogate womb, it brought about the current Middle East conflict going on for millennia—currently on the Gaza Strip, which will apparently never abate until our Lord and Savior returns to this earth, putting to an end every form of human government including democracy, a fatally flawed system of evil human government, especially when the majority of the population hates God's holy and spiritual laws, which we have witnessed not too long ago.

We can define haste as quickness, hurry, or overeagerness to act. Rashness is unwise haste, recklessness, or a response without caution or responsible deliberation. Satan often sets a trap to get us moving too quickly to catch us in an un-prayerful and unguarded moment. Proverbs 25:28 warns us that "Whoever has no rule over our own spirit is like a city broken down, without

walls.” The *Amplified* edition adds the additional cogent details: “Like a city that is broken down and without walls [leaving it unprotected] is a man who has no self-control over his spirit [and sets himself up for trouble.” This caution recalls a previous warning in Proverbs 4:23, admonishing us to “keep [our] heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life.” When we do not put on the brakes on our impulsive tongue, we will say unloving things which we will later regret.

Proverbs 18:13 warns us that if we answer a matter before we hear it, it is folly and shameful to us. The *Amplified Classic* edition renders this passage: “He who answers a matter before he hears the fact—it is folly and shame to him.”

Proverbs 25:8 warns us not to “go hastily to court;” asking what we will do in the end when our neighbor has put us to shame.

Proverbs 29:20 asks us if we have seen a man hasty in his words, warning that “there is more hope for a fool than for him.” The *Amplified* edition adds a few more vivid details: “Do you see a [conceited] man who speaks quickly [offering his opinions or answering without thinking]? There is more hope for a [thickheaded] fool than for him.”

In Ecclesiastes 5:2, David’s son Solomon admonishes us to “Do not be rash with your mouth, and let not your heart utter anything hastily before God. For God is in heaven, and you on earth; Therefore let your words be few.” The *Amplified* edition renders this passage as follows: “Do not be hasty with your mouth [speaking careless words or vows] or impulsive in thought to bring up a matter before God. For God is in heaven and you on earth; therefore, let your words be few.”

We remember in Luke 9:54-55, when James and John, the sons of thunder, asked Jesus if they should command fire to come down from heaven to consume an unwelcoming village, Jesus rebuked them, warning them that they were unaware of the spirit they were using. Let us turn to Numbers 20:10-12. Haste is often the consequences of angry impatience, which demonstrates a lack of faith. We recall the incident in Numbers 20 when Moses lost his temper at the rebellious children of Israel.

Numbers 20:10-12 And Moses and Aaron gathered the assembly together before the rock; and he said to them, “Hear now, you rebels! Must we bring water for you out of this rock?” Then Moses lifted his hand and struck the rock twice with his rod; and water came out abundantly, and the congregation and their animals drank. Then the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, “Because you did not believe Me, to hallow Me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them.”

The antidote to haste, rashness, and anger is patience, which includes godly traits of forbearance and long suffering. We need to regard patience as much more than waiting, but instead as a vital, essential life skill which we refine through good and bad experiences. When we learn to show patience with both ourself and others, we cultivate stronger relationships, as well as deeper insights from Almighty God.

Several of my precious brothers and sisters are currently undergoing life and death trials. It is in these kinds of fearful moments of waiting that we grow the most in our faith. We ultimately discover that our heavenly Father and our Savior Jesus Christ are continually working behind the scenes while we wait. If we can learn to embrace patience, we will live in harmony with God’s plan for our lives, enabling us to appreciate the beauty of life as it unfolds at its own unique pace.

Jesus’s half-brother James considered patience the capstone of perfection, asking that God’s people “count it all joy” when falling into trials, knowing that the rigorous “testing of your faith produces patience.” And that if we allow “patience to have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing” (James 1:2).

Throughout the epistles of the apostle Paul, the value of patience recurs as a perennial theme. In Romans 12:12, we are commanded to be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, and faithful in prayer. Paul admonishes us to cultivate joy and patience, even in the most horrendous trials. If we remain faithful and committed, we can navigate through the most intense of life’s difficulties with a heart rooted in prayer.

Galatians 6:9 And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.

If we exercise patience, we will ultimately witness the fruits of our efforts, learning that it is worth it to wait for blessings resulting from our commitment to doing good. In his commentary of Galatians 6:9-10, John Ritenbaugh explains that these verses address the human tendency to become discouraged when efforts in faith do not yield immediate results. The Galatians were drifting, feeling neglected due to unmet expectations of Christ's return and ongoing hardships.

The encouragement here is to maintain focus on the longtime promise of reaping a spiritual harvest which requires enduring patience and trust in God's timing. In the apostle Paul's prayer for the congregation at Colossae in Colossians 1:11, he asks that they be "strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy." We are reminded that our strength comes from Almighty God, who equips us with endurance and patience. Only as we draw on this divine power, will we find it easier to be patient to endure life's inevitable challenges.

I think all of God's chosen saints have frequently found trusting and waiting for God's timing to be difficult. We often want things to happen instantly, prompting us to act out of haste. But Scripture teaches us the value of exercising patience, allowing us to view the bigger picture. We have an obligation to recognize that Almighty God has a perfect plan for each of us. If we wait on Him, we gradually understand that His timing is entirely different from ours. When we step back and trust God, we learn that His plan indeed unfolds beautifully in its designated time.

Isaiah 40:31 But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.

We learn from this powerful verse that waiting on God can produce vigor and strength within God's chosen saints. If we exercise patience and place our hope in Him, we will achieve greater heights without being overwhelmed, rejuvenated by our faith.

Isaiah 55:8-9 “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,” says the Lord. “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.”

From this encouraging scripture, we learn to trust that God’s plans are far superior to our own. If we let go of our miniscule, limited understanding, we develop the patience to allow Almighty God’s wisdom to guide our lives perfectly.

Jeremiah 29:11 For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.

We learn from this inspiring verse that Almighty God has a beautiful, scintillating plan for our lives. If we place our trust in our heavenly Father and our Savior Jesus Christ, we can latch onto His promise of hope for a bright future rather than rushing ahead with our own misguided plans. Romans 8:28 reads, “And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.” The *Amplified Classic* edition provides further salient details: “We are assured and know that [God being a partner in their labor] all things work together and are [fitting into a plan] for good to and for those who love God and are called according to [His] design and purpose.”

We learn that if we trust Almighty God’s plan, we can wait patiently for our circumstances (which may be currently grim or unsettling) to unfold for a greater, more glorious purpose. Philippians 1:6 says, “Being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.” The *Amplified Classic* edition provides additional clarifying details: “And I am convinced and sure of this very thing, that He Who began a good work in you will continue until the day of Jesus Christ [right up to the time of His return], developing [that good work] and perfecting and bringing it to full completion in you.”

In this perceptive verse, we learn that trusting in Almighty God allows us to be patient as we grow into the godly individuals whom He has called us to be.

James admonishes us to allow patience to place a capstone on our godly character in James 1:4. Please permit me to read this passage from the *Amplified Classic* edition.

James 1:4 But let endurance and steadfastness and patience have full play and do a thorough work, so that you may be [people] perfectly and fully developed [with no defects], lacking in nothing.

For the past several years I have incorporated Psalm 37 into my daily prayers, focusing on verses 7 and 8.

Psalm 37:7-8 Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him; do not fret because of him who prospers in his way, because of the man who carries out schemes. Cease from anger, and forsake wrath; do not fret—it only causes harm.

Members of the Colton congregation have witnessed instances in which Dave Maas allowed his trigger temper to erupt, vituperating and bloviating about several issues. One of the things which has caused my carnal volcano to erupt is red traffic lights and monstrous traffic jams on the 210 freeway, with miles of red traffic lights, symbolizing (in my imagination) a type of the great red dragon of Revelation 12:3.

I remember 14 years ago becoming apoplectic in Hawkins, Texas, watching the traffic from Highway 80 inundate Beulah Street (all 3 cars), only to find the California traffic more like Hawkins, Texas to the one hundred and tenth power. Consequently, for the past 12 to 13 years, my nervous system has taken on a stressful fight-or-flight response, dumping loads of adrenaline and cortisol into my bloodstream, making me emotionally and physically sick. Consequently, I decided to experiment with the late Dr. Herbert Benson's technique to induce the relaxation response, which is, upon closer examination, a form of concentrated meditation. In the condensation of Benson's method, four factors are recommended, including:

- 1) a quiet and tranquil environment,
- 2) a mental device such as the repetition of Bible verses, such as John 14:1, 27, Philippians 4:6-7, and Psalm 35:7-8.

3) a passive or relaxed attitude, and

4) a comfortable position-using perhaps a recliner or a hammock.

Dr. Benson's technique can be successfully coupled with Pavlovian Classical Conditioning in which a naturally occurring stimulus is paired with a stimulus in the environment, with the result that the environmental stimulus eventually elicits the same response as the natural stimulus.

W. B. Yeats reflective lyrical poem, "The Lake Isle of Innisfree," was triggered by a water fountain in downtown London, reminding him of a happy location in youth as he remembered living a quiet, self-sufficient life in nature. Since my last message two months ago, I have been experimenting with replacing my hatred toward red lights with acceptance and yielding to the intricacies of man's laws as they correspond to God's holy and spiritual law.

During daily meditation sessions, I play videos of hiking in Bryce Canyon, one of my favorite spots on the entire earth, replete with miles and miles of crimson red hoodoos and canyons. These videos were designed for those who exercise on the treadmill, but I prefer the Lazy Boy™ recliner for a more relaxing hike. You can find these virtual hikes on YouTube

[*Amazing Bryce Canyon Virtual Hike - 4K Footage for Fitness Equipment /Training Simulators - 1.5 HRS*](#)

[*Bryce Canyon National Park Navajo Trail Virtual Hike - YouTube*](#)

For the past month, after the manner of W.B. Yeats, where he declares, "I will arise now and go to Innisfree," Dave Maas similarly declares, when looking at an extremely lengthy red traffic light or miles of red taillights in a monstrous traffic jam, "I will arise now and go to Bryce Canyon," displacing the hideous red traffic lights with the crimson red hoodoos and cliffs of Bryce Canyon.

These past two weeks, I have deliberately steered myself into congestive traffic to test the relaxation responses and have experienced overwhelming

success. Many of our precious spiritual siblings who are experiencing horrendous fears and anxieties may want to use this technique on those thorny problems as well. As our Lord and Savior has promised us in John 14: 7, “Peace I leave with you. . . . Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”